

# McLAURIN'S ADMINISTRATION REVIEWED

Hon. J. S. McNeilly, the Brilliant Editor of the Vicksburg Herald, Replies to Senator McLaurin's Attack  
Sensational Revelations in Connection With His Administration

Senator A. J. McLaurin's attack on the Herald through certain papers last Sunday, and which was reproduced in these columns Tuesday last, was in his very best and most typical style. Its alleged provocation was that the Herald had indulged in "unprovoked abuse of him." As a matter of fact his distinguished name has scarcely appeared in the Herald since he was governor. In recent years, by the outward signs, his senatorship has been a sideshow to his criminal law practice; notices and interviews in the Jackson papers when he was going to or from the courts being about the only evidence that he was in public life. As he was notoriously a cipher in Washington, his absences from there have called for no criticism in the Herald. So far as we recall, the last mention it had of him was of his engagement in the defense of the late Sergeant Dave Puckett, who was indicted for cruelty to convicts. As this "abuse" was in December, 1905, the fiction of his plaint is plain. The sole specification he advanced in substantiation of the charge of unprovoked abuse is the Herald's reproduction, April 28th, of an article from the Southern Sentinel, which, he says, was copied "after having it published in that subservient paper." This slur is left to the Sentinel to take care of. And as to the imputation on the board of control in said article, which the aggrieved senator charges up to the Herald, it is thus introduced: "The following is an extract taken from a speech recently delivered in Newton by Hon. E. N. Thomas, candidate for governor." The Mississippi senator treats this extract as though instigated by the Herald, though originating in the Sentinel; the fact that the real author was Mr. Thomas, he suppressed. The unblushing mendacity of this specimen of deceit is only equalled by its transparent stupidity. As to this "extract" it may be said further that the statements and conclusions of Mr. Thomas upon the record of the board of control, with which Senator McLaurin joins issue, are derived from the official report of the State revenue agent.

Having shown that the senator's attack is in its alleged cause a sham, that he has in truth been given no provocation for the libelous falsehoods he has lodged against the Herald, we will cite two circumstances which betray his real motive. Recently a Jackson scribe gave out that Senator McLaurin was going to butt in on the canvass; "warm personalities" were predicted between him and Governor Vardaman; a meeting was announced between him and Mr. Scott, where "exciting scenes" were to be expected. It was asserted by the clan positively that he was going to take the stump for Truly. Doubtless such assurance was given that protector of the State from Dago peril. Notoriously a quitter, whose courage, like that of Bob Acres, has the habit of "oozing" away when the time of performance comes on, the senator's Truly obligation has dwindled down to a slanderous attack on the Herald.

So much for the motive of the attack upon the Herald. As to the attack itself we will be pardoned for dealing somewhat plainly with accusations so widely published that seek to make the editor of the paper infamous. So long as the falsehood of being "owned by the conscienceless public service corporations, the financial pirates who are robbing the people," was only peddled out by Truly

and Brewer, it was not thought worth denial. It was thought to be a derogation, indeed, of a record that has been an open book in this State for over forty years to so dignify charges from them; charges such as no gentlemen and no scoundrel had ever uttered before. But when the libel has the endorsement of a United States senator, the case is different; albeit he simply makes three of this pair of arcades ambo.

"A lie which is all a lie may be met and fought outright, But a lie which is part a truth is a harder matter to fight."

It is our fortune to contend with that "which is all a lie." In meeting it we have only to say that it has not a single filament of fact or a color of circumstance on which to rest. We are charged with "seeing everything through the glasses of the Yazoo Valley Railroad Company"; that we "never support anybody the railroads oppose, and never oppose anybody the railroads support." The Herald readers will bear out the assertion that we have criticized the Valley road with more frequency than any other paper in this city; or, we may say, in the State. In the strictest and the broadest sense neither this paper nor this editor ever asked, or ever received, a dollar or a dollar's worth of favor, or special consideration from any railroad company or other corporation whatsoever; and, of course, no orders or directions, as to the men we have supported for office. The late Senator George was a just man, but he did not love railroads, as any one will perceive who reads the corporation article in the State constitution which he shaped, and which he said to us he had as much at heart as the elective franchise article. It will not be questioned that we were among his most trusted and valued supporters. Congressman Williams will not be charged as tainted by railroad influence. In the heated canvass, when he was first elected from this district, the Herald was his supporter. The same may be said of Governor Vardaman. Both of them were opposed by Senator McLaurin and all his clan. In short, in the words of the poet, "the lie is all a lie"; a pure concoction of falsehood; while the branded slanderer who has uttered it is known, far and wide, as the greediest seeker after railroad favors in the State. His insatiable thirst for passes, until the recent rate law—which issue he dodged until its enactment was certain—is proverbial.

Here we might rest this article, but for Senator McLaurin's fabrications of how he "incurred the enmity of the Herald." First he states: "When I was inaugurated governor I was besmirched with the praise of the Herald until after I separated its editor and his confederates from the levee board, thereby saving thousands of dollars to the people of the levee district."

The alleged "separation of the editor of the Herald from the levee board" is an unblushing falsehood; he had left Greenville a year before, and was no more interested peculiarly in levee matters than the man who utters it. As to "saving money" the record will show that McLaurin's appointees forthwith raised the salaries of levee officials, and that never since that of Adel Ames was there so costly an administration. There is a humorous feature about our said "confederates"—some of them—which we may here pertinently interject. They had supported McLaurin for governor and had urged the Herald editor to join in the procession. Although there was but a shadow of opposition, we refused, stating that we knew him to be a shyster and believed him to be a boodler, and would not touch such pitch. Equally fictitious is the rest of the quoted message. We are proud to say that McLaurin's administration, like that of Ames, earned scant praise from the Herald editor, and not a vestige, as our files, which are open to all, will show, in this period when Senator McLaurin says he was "besmirched" with it. On the contrary, he was repeatedly criticised, as our files will also show, in this time; the first occasion being his message on March 3, asking the legislature to prohibit gold contracts—a piece of demagoguery that even a free silver legislator would not treat seriously.

The following count in the indictment of The Herald will be read with a feeling of amazement at the moral obtusity of the man who could furnish such proof of his own baseness: "Again, when I used the lawful authority of the governor's office to see that the State had a fair and impartial decision of the question of the liability of the Y. & M. V. Railroad Company for taxes, which they had long shirked, and which they were continuing to shirk, which resulted

in a decision holding that company to millions of dollars of just taxes, which the plain people of the country had theretofore paid for the railroad company, the hostility of the Herald toward me was intensified."

The Herald and many other State papers condemned the bad faith of this decision, as to the taxes of 1886-1892 inclusive, taking for our text the dissenting opinion of Justice Woods. We criticised the judges and the revenue agent, with some severity. As to McLaurin, then governor, he was never thought of in this connection. Why should he have been? What is meant by his "lawful authority" to influence the court's decision in a great law suit? What can he mean by such assertion? Presumably our courts are independent and untrammelled in reaching their conclusions. Here we are told that McLaurin, the governor, vested with the power of appointment and re-appointment, "used the authority of his office" to show them what was "a fair and impartial decision." Who was this authority "used" upon, and how? What can Chief Justice Whitfield, the sole incumbent of the old court, who wrote and delivered this decision, think of such an aspersion? The story is just another falsehood, blindfolded by the intent of degrading the Herald, Senator McLaurin has witlessly slandered the supreme court judges.

The claim of the governor for any share of the credit in this decision is no less impudent than it is calumnious. So far from being entitled to credit for the recovery of "the millions of just taxes," he was employed by the railroad, as we have been informed and believe, to lobby in favor of a bill in the legislative session of 1900 to compromise the amount of the State's claim, as decreed in this "fair and impartial decision." We will give the name of our informant upon this matter, if Senator McLaurin will cite us to his authority for stating that the Herald is owned or controlled by the railroads. We have been further told that had Revenue Agent Adams been guided as urged by Senator McLaurin, the "plain people" of the State would have been juggled out of all but a million dollars of the same. If this statement is not true, we will accept correction from Mr. Adams as that part of it in which his name is used.

We quote further from Senator McLaurin's attack upon the Herald: "There is this extract in the Herald's article: 'Everybody knows the McLaurin brothers had a feast as long as they kept the keys, and when the business was turned over to Longino and Edgar Wilson, the situation showed no improvement for the State.' This vile and slimy accusation is its own refutation. No honest man who knows me can be made to believe that during the time I was governor I ever misappropriated a dollar of the State's money. I never handled any of the public money except when I counted it in the State treasury, as I was required to do by law. No brother of mine handled any of the public money except Walter McLaurin the year he was warden, and every dollar he received as warden was faithfully accounted for and turned into the hands of the State treasurer, ex-officio treasurer of the penitentiary. No honest man believes that he ever misappropriated a dollar of the State's funds, and no truthful man will ever make any such insinuation."

This extract appeared in this paper, with several columns of items from State exchanges, credited to the Southern Sentinel. Calling it the "Herald's article" will be recognized as pretty far fetched. But as we are credited with it, and as it is used in an interview designed to bring the editor of the Herald under the ban of all honest men, we will not shirk the onus so falsely imposed. Of the senator's deceased brother, we regret to speak. But when his grave is used as a shelter for a cowardly defamatory, we are warranted in showing that this extract did him no wrong. To do this we will say no more than that after his death a Delta planter and lessee of convicts exhibited to us letters from a certain lawyer calling for payment of a thousand dollars due the estate of the late warden, for services claimed in securing convicts for this planter. We will give the name of this planter, and this lawyer also, provided Senator McLaurin will cite his authority for stating that the Herald is owned or controlled by the railroads. If we dealt in common report, a column could be filled of really transactions in the late Walter McLaurin's wardenship. If it is falling in respect for the dead for such things to be said, let the blame rest upon his own brother, where it belongs—on the traducer of the living, who has called forth truth as to the dead.

"No honest man who knows me," says this pinnacle of purity, "can be made to believe that during the time I was governor I ever misappropriated a dollar of the State's money." True to the trickster nature, here we have a claim of integrity rested on the denial of a thing never charged. But how about the notorious Weathers' capitol plan, and its sinister championship by the governor; the published impeachment of his veracity by the speaker of the house and the lieutenant governor; the open signs and talk of deals and pulls to secure its adoption, which drove the legislature to reject it in the conflict of its rottenness; to pass a bill taking appointment of the building commission from a governor who rested under common distrust; naming the commission, with "honest John M. Stone as chairman" in the bill; all corroborated by the dead give way of the executive veto of the plan adopted by the legislature? Of the numberless circumstances pointing to corrupt dealings and radiating from the executive office, one only is cited. A certain big contract firm was notoriously "putting up" for the plan. After its rejection the Herald published, on the authority of the agent for said firm, that the first "expense" check was drawn on the desk of the governor for \$250.00, in consideration for work for the Weathers plan, and in favor of one of the governor's brothers, to whom the check was delivered. A challenge for contradiction of this accusation was published—a challenge that was never taken up. Poor Weathers; when he some years later went into bankruptcy, he attributed his failure to the terrible drain on his finances made by the fight for the Weathers plan. In his schedule of assets on file in the bankruptcy court at Memphis is an item of ten thousand dollars charged as an "asset" against the State of Mississippi for failing to adopt his plan. This ten thousand represents the dough he paid out in cash, in attorneys fees and lobbying, etc. Would Weathers but name names, "unfold the secrets of this prison house," what a rattling of dry bones would be there!

Senator McLaurin calls the quoted reflection upon the integrity of his brothers "a vile and slimy accusation." Let us see further as to this: The Herald, on July 1st, 1906, published a lengthy communication compiling and tabulating the contents of the State revenue agent's report on State farm receipts—the same report that Mr. E. N. Thomas quotes from as stated above. The Herald correspondent demonstrated from it that during the McLaurin administration the State was defrauded, "by graft or negligence, of nearly \$40,000 in cottonseed held out by the convict lessees. Of this sum H. J. McLaurin, one of the senator's brothers, was charged with over \$7,000. This was called an "apparent error" in a Jackson special, which "Mr. McLaurin claims to be able to explain away." He, too, denied something not charged. The actual accusation has never been denied or "explained." To this day it stands as the Herald correspondent stated it, from the revenue agent's report—as money "withheld from the State by negligence or by graft."

Senator McLaurin says: "When I recommended to the legislature the submission to the people of an amendment to the constitution for an elective judiciary, the Herald's wrath was further intensified." This is another stupendous falsehood. As State Senator Noel, the author of the amendment, will remember, the Herald supported it; we could produce columns of editorials from our files to this effect. Never a partisan of the appointive system, its gross prostitution by McLaurin, the governor, enlisted the Herald for the elective. Equally false and paltry is the following: "Again I incurred the Herald's hostility by my advocacy of primary elections, instead of conventions, to nominate candidates." We never before heard of his advocating a primary election law. Whatever especial credit is due for the primary in Mississippi belongs to Hon. Frank Burkett and Senator Noel. How he "incurred the Herald's hostility"—to speak accurately, our contempt and aversion—was by his nepotism and trafficking in judgeships; his repeated issues of veracity with men who had supported him for office and whom he had thrown down; the stories of boodling that, like the trail of the serpent, was over his whole administration; and last and worst, the frequent bestial and drunken orgies, exhibited in Vicksburg, in Jackson, in New Orleans, in Washington, in New York, on the trains and on the quarantines lines—that disgraced the Governor's office while he sat in it.

Senator McLaurin indulges the boast that he was elected to the Senate in the last election without the Herald's support. That he was elected "tis true; 'tis true, 'tis pity; and pity 'tis, 'tis true." But thank God he was never elected with our support. He speaks of "The Herald and its ilk." From Belshazzar down to McLaurin such guzzlers and grafters as defile the chronicles of their times, have been blind to the day of reckoning until there appeared the handwriting on the wall. In a time when men's minds were in a turmoil of passion and prejudice, McLaurin was thrown up like rotten drift on the surface of the political current. Realizing that he is rapidly sinking into his normal state of noxious desuetude, he has sought resuscitation through the election for Governor of Jeff Truly; a worthy pupil. He has been forced to see that his man is a flat failure as a candidate. To brace him up is the sole purpose of his wanton and slanderous attack upon the Herald. But he will fool no one. His course is run. His personality suggests nothing but bad odors. He could not carry a single congressional district in the State. He boasts that he was re-elected in 1903 without opposition. He fails to say that, though at the head of the ticket, he ran behind it, nearly 25,000 votes, and thousands of votes behind four other candidates who ran without opposition. He failed to say that after and not before, he had secured his own election in the first primary, he sneaked in an attack on Vardaman that was paraded over the State by his claquers as the finish of the long-haired man. Then the result should have opened his eyes that he was a back number. Vardaman carried the State by nearly 7,000 majority. He only lost Rankin, McLaurin's home county, by sixty votes, which in the first primary, before the professional defender of the "plain people" spoke, had gone against Vardaman by nearly three hundred votes. McLaurin's last tilt with Vardaman in the last session of the legislature, when he rallied all the clan to save the Sandy Bayou prison board of control, resulted in his ignominious defeat. And so it will be this year, with his last song of the dying swan, for Truly.

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Senator McLaurin says that he will notice the Herald no more. He began the fight by a slanderous and wholly causeless attack on the Herald, and notice is hereby served on him that we claim the privilege of the closing word, which is not yet.

The Jackson News is authority for the statement that Senator McLaurin will take an active part in the present campaign, making a number of political speeches. The spectacle of the senator, who is safely removed from where his political scalp would be in danger, trying to dictate to the people of the State who they should elect governor, etc., is one not relished by them.

The difference of John Sharp Williams' position and that of Governor Vardaman is that Vardaman favors something which the people want and which Williams says that they can't get, while Williams is against something which the people don't want and which they can't get. Both would require amendments to the Federal constitution before they could become effective. Vardaman is fighting for a live issue; Williams is nailing a dead one.

Unless President Roosevelt can prove the truth of an assertion recently made by him to the effect that certain statements made by Wm. J. Long regarding wild animals were false, he stands in danger of being himself forced to join the ranks of his famous Ananias club. Whenever persons have made statements which reflected upon the president in any way, he has been in the habit of politely calling them liars, and has accused so many people who are known to be honest of mendacity that those so stigmatized are facetiously referred to by the press as members of Roosevelt's Ananias Club. Mr. Long has challenged the president to prove the truth of the assertion he made regarding a statement which appeared in a volume of animal stories which the latter gentleman recently published, and unless he can do so his eligibility for membership in the Ananias club is established.

**The Mayor's Court.**  
Mamie Billups and Daisy Dowling, two negro women, were before Mayor Donnell on Monday charged with disturbing the peace. They were fined \$2.50 each.

**Position Desired.**  
Expert accountant and bookkeeper desires position by July 1st; best of references. Address R. H. Barrett, Scooba, Miss. 6-12-41

Col. A. S. Payne has returned from Richmond and the reunion, and speaks in glowing terms of his trip, the hospitality of the people of that city, and the sights of the Jamestown exposition, which he also visited. Col. Payne was greatly benefited by the trip, and is glad to get back home again.

Special sale of shirts at Kaufman's this week.

## THE SEMI-WEEKLY ST. LOUIS REPUBLIC

We have a remarkably good offer for those who wish to renew their subscription to the Weekly Dispatch now. The price of the Weekly Dispatch is only \$1.00. The Semi-Weekly Republic, one of the best general newspapers in the country, is \$1.00 a year. To those who will renew their subscriptions to the weekly before June 30th next, and who pay \$1.00 extra, we will send the Semi-Weekly Republic for THREE YEARS. This is a fine opportunity to get a good paper for two years FREE.

Address

## THE DISPATCH COLUMBUS, MISS.

### Sheriff's Sale.

The State of Mississippi, Lowndes County.

E. K. Walker vs. S. M. Irion.

By virtue of a writ of execution in above case to me directed from the clerk of the Circuit Court in and for said county of Lowndes, I will, on Monday, the 1st day of July, 1907, proceed to sell, in front of the courthouse door, in the city of Columbus, to the highest bidder for cash, within the hours prescribed by law, all the right, title, interest, claim and demand of said defendant in and to the following described property, to-wit: The west half of the northwest quarter and the northeast quarter of northwest quarter and east half of northeast quarter, section 35, and twenty acres off of the south part of southeast quarter, section 28, all in township 18, range 18, west, containing 220 acres more or less; the interest of said defendant, S. M. Irion, being an undivided interest; said land being in the county of Lowndes and State of Mississippi; levied on as the property of defendant, S. M. Irion, and will be sold to satisfy judgment and cost in above case.

T. A. Eggleston, Sheriff.  
Seventh day of June, 1907.

### AN ORDINANCE

Governing the Installation and Maintenance of Electrical Wiring and Appliances in the City of Columbus, Mississippi.

Be it ordained by the Mayor and City Council of the City of Columbus, Mississippi—

Section 1. That all electrical work hereafter performed within the corporate limits of the city of Columbus, Mississippi, shall be made to conform to the rules of the National Board of Fire Underwriters; and the said rules, in their present form, and as they may in future be amended, are hereby adopted and made a part of this ordinance.

Sec. 2. That license to install electrical wiring in buildings shall be granted only after the payment of a license fee of \$10.00 and the execution by the applicant of satisfactory bond in the sum of \$500.00; conditioned that, if the principal or his agents shall perform any electrical work not in compliance with Section 1 of this ordinance and not approved by the city inspector, said principal shall indemnify the owner of the building wherein the said electrical equipment is placed, for any expense incurred in conforming to said section.

Sec. 3. That it shall be unlawful for any person, firm or corporation not duly licensed to install electrical wiring in any building within the corporate limits of the city of Columbus, Mississippi. Any person violating the terms of this section shall, upon conviction, be fined not exceeding fifty dollars for each offense. All licenses expire twelve months after date of issuance. Any license is revoked when the firm or person to whom it was issued no longer maintains a place of business. Licenses are not transferable.

Sec. 4. That it is unlawful for any person, other than a duly licensed electrical wireman, or his authorized agent, to molest, remove or in any way disturb an existing system of electric light or power wiring.

It is unlawful for any plumber, gas fitter or other person to place, or cause to be placed, any metallic pipe or object in contact with an electric light or power wire, unless such wire has been properly protected in accordance with the provisions of Section 1 of this ordinance.

Sec. 5. All ordinances, or parts of ordinances, heretofore enacted and in conflict with this ordinance, are hereby repealed.

To take effect from and after ten days from this date.

### Expert Accountant.

Accounts audited and verified; complete office and factory systems devised; old systems improved and simplified. R. D. Donoho, care Mayo & Weaver. 5-8-1m

Hammocks and swings for the dull summer days. See the prettiest line ever brought to this city at The City Furniture Company. 6-2-41

## SPECIAL

FOR TWO WEEKS ONLY

To introduce Toasted Corn Flakes, we offer for two weeks only:

1 package Toasted Corn Flakes, worth 10c,

2 packages Egg-O-See, worth 20c,

The Three Packages for

25c

We also have in Breakfast Foods, Puffed Rice, Grape Nuts, Roasted Whole Wheat Berries, Ralston Breakfast Food, Cream of Wheat, Shredded Wheat Biscuit, Triscuit, Postum Cereal.

Try some of our Maple Syrup, or Old-Fashion Molasses, on some Hot Cakes.

J. H. STEVENS & SON,  
The Main Street Grocers.